

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 40 OCTOBER 17, 2005

French 'terror' troops attack striking sailors

Protests erupt in Corsica, Marseille



Reuters photos by Jean-Paul Pelissier (inset) and Eric Gaillard (above)

Thousands march October 1 (above) in Bastia, Corsica, a French colony in the Mediterranean, to protest raid by French "antiterrorist" unit on striking seamen who had taken over a ferry operated by the state-owned SNCM line. Banner reads: "Free the imprisoned unionists! No to SNCM's privatization!" Strikers protested the same day on an emergency boat in Port of Marseille, a city in southeastern France (inset).

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Deploying five helicopters with 50 commandos, a French "anti-terrorist" squad launched an assault September 28 on striking seamen from Corsica who had taken over a ferry ship in the Mediterranean. The sailors, members of the Union of Corsican Workers (STC), struck over the French government's plan to privatize the state-owned Corsica-Mediterranean ferry line (SNCM). The ferry operates between France and the island of Corsica, a colonial possession of Paris.

Unionists at SNCM in Marseille in southeastern France also walked out, occupying SNCM ships September 21. Six days later port workers struck, paralyzing all port operations there.

French prime minister Dominique de Villepin ordered the raid, which shows that Paris is using the "war on terror" against the labor movement.

In response, protests and further strike actions swept through Corsica. Nine labor unions and other groups organized a demonstration October 1 in the Corsican city of Bastia. Organizers said the demonstration involved at least 9,000 people, the Associated Press reported. A day earlier, airport workers and firefighters in Corsica walked out in solidarity with the striking unionists.

Backed by an EC-145 helicopter and armored vehicles, French police attacked striking seamen October 1 in the Corsican city of Ajaccio. Using

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Cab drivers in southern Florida strike, face down provocation by fleet owners

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

FT. LAUDERDALE, Florida—Some 200 cab drivers picketed outside the Yellow Cab Co. offices here October 3, protesting an increase in weekly charges for use of the cabs. The protesters faced down a provocation, as bat-wielding

tow truck operators came to tow their vehicles. Daily cab protests have been held in the city and around the airport.

The drivers went on strike September 26 when company owner Jesse Gaddis raised the weekly charges. Gaddis did so after Broward County commissioners agreed to an increase in cab fares. Cab drivers have been demanding relief in face of high gas prices, insurance, and leasing payments—all costs paid by the drivers.

"We used to spend \$22 on gas a day. Now we pay \$55 a day. Gaddis charges us \$560 per week. Before he charged \$480. We couldn't even make it on \$480," said Joseph Fleuridor.

David Norelus, a cab driver for four years, explained, "We pay \$110 a week for insurance. Sometimes drivers go home with no money because on

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Unionized independent truckers win jobs in Miami

BY RUTH ROBINETT

MIAMI, October 3—"Q: Where Are All The Protestors? A: They ALL Got Jobs! The Hiring Hall Now Has More Jobs Than We Can Fill!" That was the headline, in English and Spanish, of a flyer Teamsters organizers distributed this morning to truckers driving into the Port of Miami.

Daily demonstrations had been held here for two weeks to show support for the union. But the sidewalks were empty today. Local 769 opened a hiring hall here September 17 to organize the 1,700 independent truckers in the area and force the shipping firms to register with the Teamsters before dispatching owner-operators to haul containers at the Port of Miami, Port of Everglades, and local rail yards.

"Last week the Teamsters hiring hall dispatched 500 drivers to new jobs," the union flyer said. "The hiring hall is open, it's working, it's effective and it produces good jobs for good drivers. Hundreds of drivers now have the dignity and respect you only get under

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Food workers union backs striking mechanics

BY NELSON GONZALEZ

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—At a fund-raising rally in support of the mechanics, cleaners, and custodians on strike against Northwest Airlines, representatives of several unions contributed \$6,000. The September 30 event, which drew 150 strikers and supporters, was held at the headquarters of Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

Bernie Hess, a UFCW Local 789 organizer, opened the event and greeted those present. "Let us know how we can help. We are in it with you for the long haul," he told the cheering crowd.

The 4,400 strikers, members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), have been on the picket line since August 19. They rejected the company's demand for a 25 percent pay cut, a pension freeze, and layoffs of half the AMFA-organized workforce. Two weeks later Northwest filed for bankruptcy protection and announced plans for deeper cuts.

In an October 3 letter to the unions, Continued on page 7

Truckers, other working people appreciate 'Militant,' buy subs

BY PAUL PEDERSON

How have almost 800 *Militant* subs—more than half the original goal—been sold barely two weeks into an eight-week circulation campaign?

The following account gives a

glimpse: "Normally we sell three to six copies of the *Militant* here," said Dave Prince from New York in a September 29 note. He was referring to the Hunts Point meat market in the Bronx, New York, where *Militant* readers sell the paper every week. "Yesterday morning we sold 10 copies and one driver out of Pennsylvania bought a subscription," Prince said.

"The guy who subscribed reached out to shake my hand after looking over the paper. A second driver who bought the paper, an independent trucker out of the South, told us he was ready to sign up for something. He described the low pay,

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UK: sacked airline caterers win settlement

BY CELIA PUGH

LONDON—At a 600-strong meeting September 28 sacked Gate Gourmet workers voted overwhelmingly to accept a deal to return to work brokered by Trades Union Congress (TUC) general secretary Brendon Barber. Only four voted against. The company, which is the main supplier of flight meals for British Airways (BA), sacked 713 catering workers August 11 after they insisted on meeting during work time with their Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) representatives.

Earlier in the year Gate Gourmet boss Eric Born negotiated with the union a restructuring plan involving 675 redundancies (layoffs) from the workforce of 2,000. TGWU members rejected this deal in June. Workers feared that an increase in temporary workers at one work site was part of a plan to cut the

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Iraqi troops take lead in Tal Afar offensive

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—U.S. officials are pointing to the battle of Tal Afar, an Iraqi town along the Syrian border, as an indication of the increased fighting capacity of Iraqi government troops. The U.S. military says the town is a transit point for armed groups, loyal to Saddam Hussein's Baath party regime, entering Iraq from Syria to attack U.S. and Iraqi troops.

Baathist armed groups and their allies were forced to abandon Tal Afar following a weeklong U.S. bombing campaign that began on September 2 in advance of a ground offensive by Iraqi and U.S. troops. It is the largest offensive in Iraq since the assault on Fallujah last year. The U.S. military and much of the media say Iraqi troops took the lead in fighting in Tal Afar.

Iraqi forces made up 5,000 of the 8,500 troops in the offensive, and the Iraqi air force reportedly carried out its first combat support mission, ferrying police commandos and one army battalion to the battle.

The U.S. military says about 40 Iraqi battalions—roughly 750 soldiers in each—are “fully independent” or capable of fighting as the lead force.

The majority of the troops in Tal Afar are drawn from Shiite and Kurdish militias—the Badr Organization and pesh merga, respectively. Tal Afar’s 200,000 residents are mostly Sunni Muslim Turkmen.

In other developments U.S. troops said they killed Abu Azzam September 27. He is alleged to be a top aide to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq. In face of gains by Washington and its allies in Baghdad, Baathists have continued a bombing

campaign that is increasingly aimed at Shiite civilians.

Suicide bombers killed 110 people in the Shiite towns of Hillah and Balad September 29–30. The explosions took place in commercial centers in each town. The previous day in Tal Afar the first reported woman suicide bomber detonated explosives after clearing an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing six recruits. A statement attributed to Al Qaeda said the bombing was carried out by a “blessed sister.”

The bombings have increased as Iraq approaches a scheduled October 15 vote on a new constitution. A bombing campaign by Baathists and their allies aimed at disrupting elections last January largely failed.

Ninth U.S. soldier jailed for abusing Iraqi inmates

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The last of nine U.S. soldiers court-martialed for abuse of Iraqi prisoners, Lynndie England, has been sentenced to three years in prison and a dishonorable discharge from the Army. Several of the soldiers, members of a military police unit assigned to the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, said they were pressured by military intelligence officers to mistreat the prisoners in order to obtain information. No officer was charged for the crime.

Revelations last year of U.S. military personnel abusing Iraqi prisoners sparked anger worldwide. England appeared in one photo holding a leash tied to the neck of a naked prisoner (see photo above). Another showed her grinning and pointing at the genitalia of naked Iraqi prisoners as if she was firing a weapon.

England’s attorneys said she did this to please her boyfriend, Corp. Charles Graner, also a member of her military police unit.



May 2004 rally in Havana, Cuba. Sign says, “In Cuba this would never happen.”

Graner is serving a 10-year sentence at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, after his conviction on similar charges. Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick was sentenced to eight and a half years. Others received sentences ranging from six months to a year. Graner and Frederick had served as guards in U.S. prisons. A prisoner abuse scandal became public at the Pennsylvania prison where Graner worked.

Pentagon conducts drill in 9 African countries

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

In what the Pentagon called its largest military exercise in Africa since World War II, almost 200 special forces troops from Washington’s European Command (EUCOM) fanned out across north, west, and central Africa to train and conduct mock combat drills with troops from nine African countries June 6–26.

The exercise, dubbed “Flintlock 2005,” is one of a number of initiatives that Washington is using to further strengthen its position on the African continent vis-à-vis Paris and London—its main imperialist rivals in the region—and to draw African governments into closer collaboration

as part of its “war on terror.”

The Pentagon has labeled Africa’s vast Sahel region, which borders the Sahara desert to its north, a “playground for terrorists.” Flintlock 2005 was based on an imagined scenario of a terrorist group being chased from Mauritania on the continent’s western coast through Mali and Niger to the central African country of Chad. More than 3,000 military personnel from Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad, participated in these exercises, all former French colonies with the exception of Nigeria.

A reporter with *Atlantic Monthly*, Robert Kaplan, spent a month with one of the U.S. Special Forces teams and wrote a glowing account of it in an editorial published in the September 23 *Wall Street Journal*. “For a relatively small outlay in men and expenditures, the U.S. military has begun developing a badly needed, pan-African intervention force,” Kaplan wrote in the piece titled “Classic Imperialism.” He continued, “Local alliances and the training of indigenous troops, since time immemorial, are what has allowed

imperial powers to project their might at minimum risk and expense.”

The exercise is a precursor to the “Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Initiative,” a five-year, \$500 million U.S. military initiative in the region. This will be an expansion of the Pan-Sahel Initiative, under which U.S. forces have intervened in the region.

EUCOM includes Africa, although there is a discussion underway about whether to set up a separate U.S. military command for sub-Saharan Africa. “Africa is an important part of our theater, and has been neglected for too long,” EUCOM head Marine Gen. James Jones told the American Forces Press Service March 8.

The Pentagon has largely shifted its armed forces from the post-World War II bases in western Europe to eastern Europe, central Asia and Africa. As part of this the Pentagon is considering setting up 13 “forward operating sites” or “lily pads” bases in Africa with small numbers of rotating troops. The São Tomé and Príncipe islands in the Gulf of Guinea, Sierra Leone, where 3,400 UN troops are deployed, and Ghana are a few of these locations.

THE MILITANT

Independence for Puerto Rico!

FBI agents recently killed Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos. The ‘Militant’ brought you the news on protests against this assault and explained how they are tied to the struggle to end the U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico. Don’t miss a single issue!



Federico Rodríguez
September 26 protest in New York against killing by FBI of Puerto Rican militant.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

UK meat workers strike over pensions

BY ROSE KNIGHT
AND JOYCE FAIRCHILD

HAVERHILL, England—"This action is about pension rights. The company is eroding the pension we've got and putting in place an inferior one. It's also because of the way people are treated on this site," said Peter Inwood, a senior Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) steward. He was one of 100 workers picketing September 23 at Grampian Country Foods, a pork cut and kill plant here. The 24-hour strike was to defend "final salary" pensions. The workers on the picket line turned back two large meat trucks and 10 vans, including a fuel van.

A final salary pension has fixed benefits—payments linked to the wage at the time of retirement. Grampian bosses want to replace this with a "money purchase" arrangement whereby retirement benefits vary with how pension funds invested in the stock market perform. The company registered a deficit in its pension fund of £85 million (£1=US\$1.76) in May 2004, the *Independent* said.

According to the London daily, the company slaughters a quarter of all pigs and cattle in Britain and supplies

30 percent of all chicken in the country. The 1,000 workers at Grampian sites in Scotland, Wales, and England organised by the TGWU voted by a margin of three to one for taking industrial action. Pickets said that of the 950 TGWU members at Haverhill, around 500 are directly affected by the attack on the pension scheme and took part in the vote. After the Haverhill strike, action was due to spread to other Grampian plants organised by the TGWU. The Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) organises a larger number of Grampian workers but did not join the TGWU action.

"I really feel strongly about this proposed final salary closure," said Lucy Woodhouse, who has worked at the company for 33 years, and been a member of the TGWU since she was 14. "If the company had listened and negotiated with the TGWU this strike wouldn't have happened."

Peter Inwood said the company had issued a statement saying they did not want people intimidated by pickets. "But we're the ones who have to put up with that from management every day of the week," he said. "They are dividing the workforce by bringing in

Boeing Machinists OK pact, end strike

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

SEATTLE—After 28 days on the picket line, 18,400 Machinists at Boeing approved a new contract by a vote of 80 percent. The three-year pact includes a nearly 17 percent increase in pension payouts and no changes in health benefits. Workers will receive three lump sum payments over the life of the agreement, but no increase in wages. Because the signing bonus in the first year is based on 8 percent of the past year's wages, workers who were recalled from several years on layoff in the months and weeks before the strike will receive a much smaller payment.

Union and company officials praised the deal. Mark Blondin, president of International Association of Machinists District 751, said Boeing withdrew "every one of their takeaway proposals." Alan Mulally, president of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, said, "The total cost to Boeing is similar to the previous contract offer," which included higher health-care costs for workers, no retirement health coverage for new hires, a 10 percent boost in pension benefits, and a 2.5 percent wage raise.

In the days before the walkout, Boeing appealed to recently rehired workers to vote against striking by offering large one-time bonuses. Boeing's strategy to divide the workforce misfired badly when 86 percent of Machinists voted to strike on September 1. Strikers across generations said the vote strengthened the union position. They also pointed to the large number of unfilled orders for Boeing commercial airplanes.

Some workers were not satisfied with the agreement. "I believe that if the contract was rejected, Boeing would be pressured by airline orders to do better by us. On top of my list is a general wage increase," Brad Lee, who has worked at Boeing for 25 years, told the *Militant* the day of the contract vote.

Solidarity with the walkout was

beginning to pick up steam in the closing weeks of the strike. Workers from several unions in the Puget Sound region joined the picket lines. Workers on strike against Boeing in Australia also visited picket lines here.

Unionists walk out over prayer breaks at Nebraska plant

BY MARY MARTIN
AND HELEN MEYERS

NORFOLK, Nebraska—Some 300 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 271 at Tyson Fresh Meats here walked off the job September 17 to protest company denial of prayer breaks and the firing of 10 workers for "unauthorized breaks."

The conflict unfolded after the union contract expired in early September, and during talks for wage and health-care improvements and a recruitment drive to increase union membership.

The 300 workers who walked out are Muslims originally from Somalia. Half the workers at the plant are Somalian. The workforce also includes Sudanese, Mexican, U.S.-born, and other workers. Many employees are women.

For years the Somali workers have organized to relieve each other on the line for prayer breaks with Tyson's agreement. Over a year ago Tyson set up a symbolic "Mosque," or prayer space with room for two workers.

"Since the union recruitment drive in the plant, the company has been making a lot of problems not only for the Somali workers but for other workers who request a break," Said Yousuf, a shop steward at the plant and a leader of the Somali community in Norfolk, told the *Militant*. "Supervisors started telling workers who requested a break, 'That's your problem; I don't have enough people today.' Then the supervisors announced they would start following workers to the bathroom and write them up if they were using the

Hospital workers walk out in San Francisco



Militant/Laura Anderson

Members of Service Employees International Union on strike against California Pacific Medical Center successfully block bus with scabs being transported to work September 28 at struck San Francisco hospital. Striking mechanics at Northwest joined action in solidarity. Some 800 certified nurses aides, dietary workers, lab technicians, and custodians walked out September 13 in a contract dispute.

temporary workers and deliberately trying to force out long-service workers by attacking pensions. They know long-service workers at this site won't be intimidated. Management is telling us if we take action the company could shut down the plant."

At 3.30 p.m. September 23 the strike was abruptly called off and all future action suspended. According to the *Independent*, the courts had upheld a legal challenge by the bosses to the TGWU-organised ballot. Grampian's legal advisers had argued that the union's ballot was unlawful because the company's name was incorrectly rendered on voting forms sent to employees. The TGWU is appealing this

ruling and if necessary will re-ballot to continue the action.

The day before the walkout in Suffolk, USDAW members at Grampian Halls near Edinburgh held mass meetings where they voted to accept a pay rise of 3.25 percent. Till a week earlier the company had been pressing a lower offer tied to an erosion of many long-established conditions. In response, 100 workers attended a union meeting and voted for strike action. Many said the company retreated out of fear of union action in two major plants at once. The TGWU is also balloting for action over wages and conditions at two smaller chicken plants run by Grampian in Coupar Angus, Scotland, and Sandycroft, Wales.

bathroom break for prayer."

On September 17, after firing 10 workers for "unauthorized breaks," a supervisor followed a Somali woman to the bathroom. "This made workers very upset and 300 walked out," Yousuf said. "Sixty have stayed away until the company takes the 10 fired workers back and agrees to allow us to resume prayer breaks. We told the company all Somalis would quit Tyson and leave Norfolk with our families if we were not allowed time for prayer."

After the walkout, Tyson officials requested a meeting with the union and Somali community leaders. Yousuf said the bosses pleaded with workers to re-

turn. Negotiations are continuing.

Yousuf said police are now posted in the plant parking lot and at the guard shack with metal detectors. Plainclothes cops are inside the plant.

Ahmed Hashi, a Somalian community leader, told the *Militant* that the company and the local newspaper have painted a picture of Muslims as troublemakers. "Why not say 'union workers' in the news stories instead of 'Muslim workers'?" he said.

"The union backs these workers completely," Alex Hernandez, international representative of the UFCW, said. "We are trying to get the new contract language to include prayer breaks."

Florida taxi drivers face down provocation

Continued from front page

some days you only make \$50 a day, which doesn't even cover gas. One day you make \$150 and nothing the next. Sometimes you wait 2-3 hours for a \$6 fare."

Cab drivers said that in 2000 they held protests around similar questions.

The cab bosses told the press they will not negotiate with the drivers association, offering to meet with the drivers individually. The bosses' offer was met by a loud rejection by the drivers picketing outside the company's headquarters October 3. To pressure them to go back to work, drivers said, the company hired tow trucks to haul away the cabs from their homes at night.

In a provocation during the October 3 protest, four tow trucks drove up to

the site where the protesters had parked their cabs to try to tow the vehicles. They did tow one cab.

The drivers faced off the tow truck operator surrounding another cab. A fight erupted after the truck operator threw a large piece of towing equipment that damaged the car. Three other tow truck operators moved in wielding baseball bats. They threatened violence and shouted racist epithets against the strikers, the majority of whom are Haitian immigrants.

The cops, who arrived a half hour after the fight started, ordered the tow truck operators to leave. The strikers remained unintimidated.

Róger Calero contributed to this article.

International support grows for Militant Fighting Fund

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Support for the Militant Fighting Fund is expanding internationally. The fund was set up to help defend the *Militant* and publicize the fight of the United Mine Workers of America, individual Co-Op coal miners, and other targets of a retaliatory lawsuit filed by the C.W. Mining Company in Utah.

In September, Local 13 of the Maritime Union of New Zealand sent a contribution of NZ\$500 (NZ\$1.00=US\$0.69) for the fund. In a letter enclosing the check, Secretary/Treasurer of the union, Russell Mayn, said, “The *Militant* is a valued publication and the Local 13 executive is pleased to be of some assistance to its ongoing fight for workers rights throughout the world.”

Militant supporters have been selling the paper on the docks in Auckland since 1998, when dockworkers in Australia waged a major strike against union busting. Unionists here responded with interest to the *Militant’s* coverage of that struggle. Since then dockworkers have continued to buy the paper and pass it around.

Other trade unionists in New Zealand are also signing up to support the Militant Fighting Fund. Jill Ovens, senior organiser for the Service and Food Workers Union; and Paul Piesse, a member of the Southern Local Government Officers Union, have recently endorsed. When supporters of the *Militant* explain the stakes in this fight, how C.W. Mining is trying to stop union organizing and punish newspapers that tell the workers’ side of the story, there is a real interest in helping out.

Other recent endorsers of the Militant Fighting Fund here include well-known human rights activist Maire Leadbeater, and Morgan Johns, National Affairs Officer for the Auckland University Students Association.

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

REYKJAVIK, Iceland—Supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund here met recently with Ögmundur Jónasson, chairman of the Confederation of State and Municipal Employees (BSRB) and a member of parliament. After discussing the fight against the harassment lawsuit by C.W. Mining and

NY forum protests FBI killing of Ojeda Ríos



Militant/ Dan Fein

Nearly 60 people attended a New York Militant Labor Forum September 30 to protest the killing of Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, leader of the Macheteros organization, by FBI agents on September 23. The panel included Frank Velgara (at podium), representing ProLibertad Freedom Campaign; Martín Koppel (second from left), Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York; and Hiram Rivera and Camilo Matos (right) representing the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party youth. Chairperson Salm Kolis is at left.

the union-organizing struggle of the Co-Op miners, Jónasson endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund and contributed \$100. BSRB has 18,000 members in 28

unions around Iceland. Erlingur Hansson, a member of the Teachers’ Union in Iceland, also endorsed and made a contribution.

Truckers, others appreciate ‘Militant,’ snap up subscriptions

Continued from front page favoritism, and long hours they face.”

This was a typical response among truckers along the East Coast of the United States and many other working people last week.

In addition to regular weekly sales at factory gates around New York, special *Militant* sub teams went to other workplaces. “We organized teams to workers at UPS, DHL, Overnite trucking, and the port in Red Hook, Brooklyn,” said Dan Fein. “The response has been extremely good. We have sold more subscriptions in New York in two weeks than we did during the entire seven-week effort last spring.” New York raised its quota from 250 to 350.

At Port Newark, New Jersey, subbing

has been brisk. “After 40 minutes we had sold 4 subscriptions and 17 copies of the paper,” said Angel Lariscy from Newark about a September 28 visit. There was a similar response a week later. “We had another great sale to truckers this morning,” Lariscy said October 4, “selling 6 subs and 12 singles, and then 3 more subs on campus.”

At a truck stop in Wilmington, California, sandwiched between the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, truckers bought 25 copies and one sub October 1, in spite of slow Saturday traffic.

“We sold the sub to a Mexican driver, a real union guy,” reported Frank Forrestal from Los Angeles. “On his most recent trip, he said he was paid \$850, but his fuel costs came to \$500, and he had to replace a tire for \$370. He was glad to hear about some of the successes in Miami and told us about port drivers’ efforts in Los Angeles to organize—so far unsuccessfully. We exchanged phone numbers and he told us about another location to meet drivers.”

A team of *Militant* readers went subbing at coal mining areas in western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia September 29–October 2, selling 25 subs and 155 copies. They sold outside eight mine portals in northern Appalachia, door-to-door in many coalfield towns, on campuses, and at picket lines of striking workers at the PPG chemical plant in West Virginia, the Ormet Aluminum plant in Hannibal, Ohio, and of parking lot attendants in Pittsburgh organized by the Teamsters.

“There was a real positive response in the discussion with workers to what’s in the paper, like the strike coverage and the articles on Hurricane Katrina,” said Chris Sang from Pittsburgh. “People

knew what they could expect and wanted to try a subscription.”

A regional team will sell subs in Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska October 8–11. Efforts to reach coal miners in the

West and truckers in Charleston, South Carolina, begin October 15. Readers are urged to help. To join a team contact *Militant* supporters nearest you (see page 8) or the paper directly.

Success of ‘Militant’ sub drive can help SWP Party Building Fund

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The first two weeks of the campaign to win more than 1,500 new subscribers to the *Militant* show the possibilities to reach out to workers, farmers, and youth to secure contributions to the 2005 SWP party-building fund.

The effort to raise \$90,000 to help finance the work of the Socialist Workers Party goes hand in hand with the *Militant* sub drive and can get the same enthusiastic response if supporters of the fund ask everyone they are meeting for donations.

The SWP relies on money from the fund to be on a footing to pitch in at the hot spots in the class struggle. From independent truckers in Florida to meat packers in Nebraska workers are resisting the bosses’ drive against our wages and standard of living. SWP leaders will also be participating in activities around the world like the upcoming book fair in Equatorial New Guinea in West Africa.

Socialist workers across the United States are planning meetings to discuss the political opportunities today and raise additional pledges and contributions for the fund. In San Francisco, socialist workers are organizing a meeting on Sunday, October 9, on the imperialist threats against Iran. Doug Nelson, a member of the SWP National Committee who attended the 18th Tehran International Book-fair, will be speaking. Betsey Stone reports that a large mailing has been sent out to build the meeting with a cover letter explaining the fund.

John Studer of Philadelphia reports that announcements are being made about the fund at weekly Militant La-

bor Forums. “At the forum last week,” he said, “we got one new pledge.”

Working out a weekly payment schedule with those who have made pledges is necessary to keep on target. To meet the goal, supporters of the fund effort are also urged to be looking for every opportunity to raise their quotas.

All information on public meetings and other fund-raising activities should be sent to the *Militant* by each Saturday to be included in this column. All funds should be sent in as soon as they are collected to 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Checks should be made out to the SWP.

Fall 2005 ‘Militant’ Sub Drive September 17-November 13 Week 2 of 8			
Country	Goal	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Salt Lake City	35	20	57%
Price, UT	60	33	55%
Pittsburgh	75	40	53%
Seattle	65	34	52%
Newark	150	76	51%
Washington	70	30	43%
Des Moines	90	37	41%
Detroit	10	4	40%
San Francisco	60	24	40%
Philadelphia	110	43	39%
Twin Cities	110	43	39%
Atlanta	80	31	39%
Los Angeles	135	51	38%
New York*	350	131	37%
Miami	70	26	37%
Birmingham	55	20	36%
Boston	100	31	31%
Houston	75	23	31%
Chicago	90	22	24%
U.S. total	1,790	719	40%
CANADA	75	26	35%
SWEDEN	30	10	33%
AUSTRALIA	35	10	29%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	20	6	30%
London*	60	14	23%
UK total	80	20	25%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	30	7	23%
Christchurch	20	2	10%
N.Z. total	50	9	18%
ICELAND	22	2	9%
Int’l totals	2,082	796	53%
Goal/Should be	1,500	376	25%
*raised goal			

Correction

The article “Pittsburgh socialist candidates visit picket lines” in the October 10 issue incorrectly identified the Teamsters local of striking parking lot workers in Pittsburgh. It is Teamsters Local 926.

\$90,000 SWP Party Building Fund Sept 11–Nov 20: Week 3 of 10			
	Pledge	Collected	%
Philadelphia	3,000	700	23%
New York	12,500	2,351	19%
San Francisco	9,500	1,460	15%
Newark	4,000	465	12%
Washington	3,000	300	10%
Des Moines	1,500	140	9%
Twin Cities	4,500	320	7%
Atlanta	5,000	325	7%
Los Angeles	8,500	550	6%
Birmingham	1,700	100	6%
Boston	3,000	160	5%
Pittsburgh	3,500	120	3%
Houston	3,500	100	3%
Chicago	5,000	100	2%
Seattle	7,000	25	0%
Miami	1,700	0	0%
Price, UT	1,700	0	0%
Salt Lake City	700	0	0%
Other	1,736	1,136	65%
TOTAL	81,036	8,352	9%
Goal/should be	90,000	27,000	30%

God, they're so clever— Book dealers are offering a new swindle—Classroom textbooks,



Harry Ring

allegedly independent of the bible, that instead offer a “literary” appreciation of material

from the good book. With questions like: “What happened on the road to Damascus (A: Jesus was crucified. B: Mary met an angel of the Lord. C: St. Paul was blinded by a vision from God).” A crude violation of the separation of church and state? Don't be so irreverent!

Can't give them everything—Homeless hurricane refugees are not swarming up the gangplanks of three big Carnival cruise ships. Mean-

while, members of Congress are mumbling about a probe of the FEMA contract of \$236 million. More than a thousand shoreside workers will be berthed on the ship. Only a few evacuees are looking for berths there. Apparently they're focused on the need for homes, jobs, and schools for their offspring.

Don't be silly—The UK is slated to reject passports in cases where the bearer's photo shows them smiling. British

holders must be shown looking straight ahead, mouth closed, and with a neutral expression. This is said to make the scanning of snapshots greater security-wise.

Imperialism, not very tidy—Months back, a *Los Angeles Times* headline declared: “U.S.-Trained [Colombian] Fighters Seek Jobs in Iraq.” These days it seems indecent to call them mercenaries. The article cites a member of Congress who wor-

ries that “U.S. government contractors are hiring thousands of impoverished former military personnel, with no public scrutiny, little accountability, and large hidden costs.”

P.S.—“Suspected rebels ambushed and killed 10 police officers on a remote highway.... Lt. Gov. Fabio Trujillo said either the National Liberation Army or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia was likely to blame.”—News item.

Farm workers union marks 40 years since historic strike

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

DELANO, California—About 300 people converged on 40 Acres September 17 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Delano Grape Strike. The United Farm Workers (UFW) hosted the all-day event, which included panels on the 1965 strike and grape boycott, and honored farm workers who walked out of Delano-area wine and table grape vineyards in September 1965.

Speaking at the panel on the grape strike, Andy Imutan, a leader of Filipino farm workers, described how the strike began when 1,000 Filipino farm workers struck over the growers' refusal to meet their demand for wage increases. The National Farm Workers Association, led by Cesar Chávez, soon backed the Filipino workers and the organizing drive took on new momentum.

After five years of organizing, walk-outs, and an international grape boycott that mobilized tens of thousands of Chicanos, unionists, and students, the

California grape growers were forced to sign contracts with the UFW in 1970. Several people on the panel on the grape boycott described these efforts.

After honoring many of the original pioneers of the union, UFW president Arturo Rodríguez spoke about the recent vote to organize farm workers at Giumarra Vineyards, which employs about 4,000 workers. In a close election September 1, the union received 1,121 votes with 1,246 voting against. The result against the union has not yet been officially certified as there are 171 challenged ballots, which will be examined by a labor board, AP reported. The last time the UFW had a contract with Giumarra was in the early 1970s. Rodríguez said, “The union will go after Giumarra until we get a contract.”

There are signs of resistance in the fields. In the past year five workers have died of heatstroke, two of them at Giumarra. Workers make low wages and face speedup and grower harass-

ment. “They yell at us really bad,” said Juana Carbajal, a grape picker and union organizer at Giumarra. “People are tired of being treated like dogs.”

Rodríguez also reported that the union signed a contract with E & J Gallo Winery of Modesto in Napa County—the state's largest winery—after a two-year fight. Farm workers' wages will increase 9.5 percent to \$8.98 by the end of the 30-month contract, according to the UFW. For the first time, the pact also covers contract farm workers, who make up 228 of Gallo's 308 employees.



Strike vote in grape fields in Delano, California, in 1966. Strike and boycott won support across the country for this struggle.

These workers will have the same wage rates and ability to file grievances. The contract workers, however, do not get health coverage. In place of health benefits they will receive a \$400 bonus.

New, redesigned Pathfinder Press website is now up and running

BY JIM ALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO—A redesigned Pathfinder Press web site is now up and running. It has the same address as before, www.pathfinderpress.com, and it incorporates the latest technology to be attractive and easier to use.

The more than 500 books and pamphlets distributed online by Pathfinder contain the historic lessons of a century and a half of struggles by working people around the world. Readers can find a wide selection of titles arranged by subject. The site can also be searched by author, by entering a title or key word, or by a book's ISBN number. The latter is used by bookstores, libraries, and wholesalers. A “language” button enables readers to quickly find titles in Spanish and French, along with a smaller selection of revolutionary books in Farsi, Swedish, Icelandic, Greek, and Russian. These author or language searches can be shown as lists on the screen and quantities selected without having to go to each book page.

A new “Inside this book” feature allows site users to see the attractive photo sections, read introductions, and review the table of contents of many books. For each book, readers will find related titles and other books by the same author. Promotional flyers and reviews of Pathfinder books can also be downloaded from the site.

The new site will facilitate orders from individuals, and by bookstores and libraries anywhere in the world. Detailed ordering information can be found at the touch of improved “How to Order” and “Contact Us” buttons.

Ordering has been improved. Applications for new accounts and questions can be submitted right on the web site. The cost of an order is tallied at the top of the page as books are added. A new feature allows customers to reorder titles without having to search through the site for them.

Two years in the making, the site was created by a web design firm working with volunteers from the Pathfinder Printing Project. Along with creating

a fresh and more attractive site, the new technology employed allows volunteers to keep it up to date with substantially less labor time than the old site.

Sales volunteers are gearing up to introduce the new site to bookstore buyers and librarians. “We'll work together to make sure every one selling Pathfinder books in the Bay Area is thoroughly familiar with the site's new features,” said San Francisco sales volunteer Peter Buch. “Launching the new site is a good

opportunity to get back to bookstores we haven't been to in a while. There are buyers who can be convinced to put in orders who were put off in the past by confusing aspects of the old site.”

In a letter to all current customers describing the new site's advantages, Holly Harkness wrote, “[W]e plan to continuously improve pathfinderpress.com over the coming months. If you have any suggestions, we would love to hear from you.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 17, 1980

CLEVELAND—United Auto Workers Local 451 won an important victory on September 4 in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court when it beat back Baker Material Handling Corporation's attempts to jail five militants on charges of violating a previous court injunction.

However, the court did find Local 451 guilty of contempt of court, fining it \$500. The court also found Vice-president Jim Hardin, committeeman Jim McKee, and union member Leonard Edmiston guilty of contempt—fining them \$500 each and giving them ten-day jail sentences.

The jail sentences and half the fines were suspended, provided that these strike activists stay away from the picket line until the end of the strike.



October 17, 1955

Mass protest meetings in Negro communities throughout the country continued to demand federal action against the reign of terror in Mississippi which culminated in the unpunished lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till. As these demands failed to stir either the Democratic Congressional leaders or the Republican administration into any kind of effective action, the speeches of Negro leaders became sharper and more threatening.

The text of an angry letter written by Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to Democratic National Chairman Paul Butler warned that unless the Democratic Party does something about Democratic-run Mississippi it may lose the Negro vote.



October 1, 1930

A couple of months ago, the Militant announced that during the summer period it would be compelled to go back to semimonthly publication, after which it would resume its weekly appearance. The summer months have drawn to a close and we are anxious to make every effort to publish the Militant as a weekly once more.

With its initial appearance, the Militant set itself the aim of reaching the workers with the truth. To tell the workers the truth about the capitalist system and the capitalist class is to liberate them from the mental slavery under which they live. To tell the truth about the situation in the revolutionary and labor movements is to liberate them from the illusions and deceptions practiced against them by false leaders.

Bali, UK bombings show disintegration of Islamic jihadism

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The October 1 bombing in Bali, Indonesia, like the July 7 and 21 bombings in London, were signs of the continued disintegration of Al Qaeda and other groups that are part of what is sometimes called Islamic jihadism.

This decline has accelerated since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington. The results of 9/11 dealt these groups a deadly blow and gave the U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies the biggest opening in years to step up their “war on terrorism” at home and abroad.

As U.S. and other imperialist governments have learned from each attack by Al Qaeda, which they have systematically wiped out, the organization has relied increasingly on homegrown and amateurish groups in targeted countries.

Al Qaeda and other Islamic jihadist movements say their goal is to overthrow “apostate” regimes and establish Islamic states. For these groups, the rulers of Saudi Arabia are “infidels” controlling and profaning the holy sites of Islam.

Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who comes from a wealthy capitalist family in Saudi Arabia, went to Afghanistan in the 1980s to join U.S.-armed guerrillas fighting the Soviet invasion of that Central Asian country. He reportedly put together a list of jihadist fighters out of which the initial cadres of Al Qaeda were recruited.

The bureaucratic policies of the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan, as well as the brutal 1979–89 occupation by Soviet troops, drove many to the side of landlord-backed counter-revolutionary groups, which called for a “holy war” against “atheistic communism.” With the collapse of the Moscow-backed Najibullah regime in 1992, the Taliban emerged as a major force among these reactionary guerrilla armies. Covertly financed by the Pakistani government, the Taliban captured Kabul and imposed their regime in September 1996.

The Taliban-led government gave Bin Laden refuge and a base of operations. The forces that became Al Qaeda then sought to expand their targets, hoping the takeover in Afghanistan could be repeated elsewhere. Seeking to advance that goal, they recruited combatants to fight in the wars in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Kashmir, among others.

The 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon represented a sensational blow-off of jihadism, not a high point, however. That current has been in decline for the past two decades. Its weakening takes place in the context of the political bankruptcy and exhaustion of bourgeois nationalist currents in the Mideast and elsewhere.

Exhaustion of bourgeois nationalism

After World War II, bourgeois nationalist leaderships stood at the head of a number of democratic and anti-imperialist struggles in the Mideast, from Egypt to Iran. These currents were

dominant because the Stalinized Communist parties—the main political force in the workers movement—betrayed the interests of working people and the oppressed in their struggles against imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation. The anti-imperialist gains that were won, such as the nationalization of the oil wealth, led to further capitalist development, class differentiation, and the consolidation of national bourgeoisies in these countries. After the 1960s, the discrediting of the Stalinists and the growing historical exhaustion of bourgeois nationalists—which had substituted for revolutionary leaderships in that region—created a political vacuum that led to the temporary rise of Islamist groups.

The Islamic jihadists won some mass support by adopting militant, sometimes anti-imperialist rhetoric. Their high point was in the late 1970s, marked by the November 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by hundreds of Islamist rebels, who condemned the Saudi royal family for straying from the teachings of the Koran. The uprising was brutally crushed. In 1981 an Islamist group assassinated Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

Over the following two decades, however, Islamist groups have declined. These pro-capitalist currents, like the bourgeois nationalists, have proven incapable of providing leadership in anti-imperialist struggles.

Following the 1991 Gulf war, Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for a number of armed actions in Saudi Arabia, such as the 1996 truck bombing of the Khobar military compound, which killed 19 U.S. soldiers and led to increased strains between Washington and the royal family. One aim of the group was to provoke a break in relations between the U.S. and Saudi governments, a situation that could then be used to incite a rebellion against the monarchy.

That too was a major objective of the 9/11 attacks, in which 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis.

9/11 flareout of Al Qaeda

But the opposite happened. In the days after the attack on the Twin Towers, at the request of the Saudi government—which feared reprisals against its citizens—Washington sent dozens of Saudis back home.

In 2003, most of the 5,000 U.S. troops were pulled out of Saudi Arabia and re-deployed elsewhere in the region. And Washington has successfully pressed the Saudi rulers to crack down on Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups that had a base of support in that country, including among a section of the royal family.

Under the banner of the “global war on terrorism,” Washington and other imperialist governments have taken steps to transform their military into a more effective, agile force to be able to fight the wars the imperialist rulers know they will need to wage. This includes measures at home to expand police spying and disruption

Dubai: laborers march, win back pay



AFP/Getty Images

Some 850 laborers—mainly from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—marched in downtown Dubai, United Arab Emirates, September 19 to protest going unpaid for months and abysmal working conditions. In an unprecedented action, the ministry of labor ordered their employer—Al Hamed Development and Construction of Abu Dhabi—to hand over back wages totaling \$7 million within 24 hours and pay fines, the *New York Times* reported. The workers got paid within days. About 6,000 immigrant laborers who live in desert work camps outside Dubai have gone without pay for over four months. Many spend almost \$2,000 to get to Dubai, and toil in summer heat that can exceed 120 degrees for less than \$200 per month. Eighty percent of 1 million Dubai residents are immigrants. Labor unions are illegal in the country.

operations as well as legitimizing the increased use of the military in domestic “counterterrorism.”

In this way the U.S. government and its allies have proceeded to destroy Al Qaeda and similar networks around the world. Since the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, they have gained collaboration from governments in the Mideast and Central and South Asia—under the threat of “either you are with us or you will suffer the consequences”—in helping to dismantle these groups.

Bombing attacks by groups like Al Qaeda have continued, from the 2004 Madrid railroad bombings to the October 1 attacks in Bali, Indonesia, which were attributed to Jemaah Islamiyah, a group linked to Al Qaeda. But they have become progressively less destructive or effective.

In the July 7 bombings, where 56 people were killed in the London subway and bus system, the police quickly arrested four individuals who are British citizens. Two weeks later, an amateurish bombing attempt there failed and the cops arrested several more individuals, all British residents.

In Iraq, the Al Qaeda group report-

edly led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian, has carried out a campaign of deadly attacks against Shiites. This included a September 14 car bombing in Baghdad that killed more than 100 day laborers.

The political evolution of these currents has some similarities with the Red Brigades, Baader-Meinhof Gang, Black Liberation Army, Weather Underground and other anti-working-class groups that operated in the 1960s and '70s. Those petty-bourgeois radicals, which carried out an ultraleft course of “armed struggle,” moved increasingly toward a nihilist cult of violence and glorification of thuggery, not unlike the anarchists in the 1870s who under the leadership of Michael Bakunin sought to disrupt the International Workingmen’s Association led by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

The reactionary character of groups like Al Qaeda and their political isolation was highlighted earlier this year when hundreds of electrical workers took to the streets of Baghdad in March to protest attacks by antigovernment bombers against power plants that had killed dozens of their co-workers.

‘Antiterror’ squad attacks seamen

Continued from front page

trucks and trailers, the strikers were blocking access to the only cargo vessel in the port. Shortly after this raid, cops stormed two petrochemical and oil terminals in the port of Marseille that workers had occupied for six days. Dock workers there walked out in response.

Alain Mosconi, leader of the dockers and seamen branch of the STC, announced the lifting of the blockade of Corsican ports October 2, at least for a couple of days. The move allowed stranded tourists to leave the island nation and necessary medicines to be brought in.

In France, a nationwide strike took place October 4 to demand public sector pay raises and to protest new antilabor legislation. Solidarity with the SNCM strikers was a theme of protest demonstrations in Marseille, where tens of thousands marched, and other

French cities that day. Mosconi said that strike and other protest actions in Corsica could resume after October 4, reported the *International Herald Tribune*.

Privatization of SNCM would eliminate about 400 jobs out of the 2,400 workers in the state-owned company. Some 40 members of the STC began moving the *Pascal Paoli* ferry from the waters by Marseille September 27 to demonstrate opposition to privatization. There were no passengers aboard. The French commando assault took place the following day near the port of Bastia.

“Covered by airborne snipers, 50 hooded men from the paramilitary gendarmerie intervention group, the French antiterrorist unit, slid down ropes on to the deck,” reported the *Times* of London. The workers “were

Continued on next page

After Hurricane Rita, social disaster spreads

BY PAUL PEDERSON
AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

LAKE CHARLES, Louisiana—Hurricane Rita, the second major storm to tear through this state in a month, compounded the social disaster facing workers and farmers here. With close to 1 million people still displaced after Hurricane Katrina, hundreds of thousands more who lived in western Louisiana and eastern Texas in Rita's path are now returning, often to homes destroyed and jobs gone.

Left largely to fend for themselves, working people are acting together to reduce the impact of the devastation.

"We're running three generators, we've got the pumps running into the swimming pool for the kids, we lay

the mattresses out and house about 20 people in the clubhouse," said Rick Courtney, 38, whose family is part of the maintenance staff at the Country Aire Mobile Home Park just outside Lake Charles. "Every night we're running the grill and pooling our food to help each other out." Of the more than 200 mobile homes, roughly half were demolished or severely damaged.

Courtney had worked on an off-shore oil rig, which Rita swept out to sea. According to the *Financial Times*, the storm "caused more damage to oil rigs than any other storm in history and will force companies to delay drilling for oil in the U.S. and as far away as the Middle East." Thousands of workers in this region are employed in building,



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Tina Augustine after returning to her home October 1 in a mobile home park struck by Hurricane Rita near Lake Charles, Louisiana. Roy Smith, right, stopped by to help.

servicing, or working on these rigs.

Tina Augustine, 43, a nursing home worker, was just returning October 1 to assess the damage to her trailer. She

was luckier than neighbors whose trailers were reduced to rubble. Two friends stopped by to check in and help. "I took my last \$200 with me and went to stay with my brother-in-law's family in Lafayette," she said. "There were 18 of us in a house smaller than my trailer."

"After the evacuation you were on your own. You got no help," she added. "At the Red Cross they turned us out the door. They told us that they were too busy helping people from Katrina to help people from Rita. Then they locked the door to their office."

Augustine tried to get her last paycheck from her boss at the nursing home but discovered it had been destroyed by the storm and the boss was nowhere to be found. "We work like dogs at this place for \$5.15 an hour," she said. "They just don't get it. Without us there wouldn't be anything."

After the two storms hundreds of thousands face similar conditions, sleeping on couches and floors with relatives scattered across the region. More than 100,000 remain in shelters.

More than 200,000 homes were destroyed in New Orleans alone from Katrina, roughly seven times more than all the losses of four hurricanes that made landfall last year. Thousands more have been destroyed by Rita. Government officials have made it clear that their reconstruction priorities do not include working-class communities.

Housing and Urban Development chief Alphonso Jackson told the *Houston Chronicle* that a large portion of working-class residents of New Orleans who are Black should not expect to return to the city.

"New Orleans is not going to be as black as it was for a long time, if ever again," Jackson told the *Chronicle*. Prior to the hurricane, New Orleans was 67 percent Black. But according to the *Chronicle*, "Jackson predicted New Orleans will slowly draw back as many as 375,000 people, but that only 35 to 40 percent of the post-Katrina population would be black." Working-class housing, much of which had been concentrated on the low ground, is not part of the development plan.

Appeal to our readers

Since Hurricane Katrina, the *Militant* has spent over \$6,000 to send reporters to the Gulf Coast to provided coverage like the article above. We would like to continue, but need more funds. To help, send your donation now to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Unionized independent truckers in Miami get jobs

Continued from front page

United States Labor Law when you're an 'employee owner-driver'.... They don't want you to have any rights, any protection, or any security. But most of all, they don't want to have to bargain with the Teamster's union and give you better pay and benefits. We understand. No boss wants to treat his workers like equals. No slave owner ever wanted to end slavery."

Jose Abré and Aubrey Travieso signed up with the Teamsters two weeks ago, at the beginning of the union-organizing drive. Most of the 500 truckers had to cancel individual contracts with shipping companies to sign up with the union, effectively quitting previous jobs.

"The union offers medical insurance for the whole family, including dental and vision," Abré told *The Militant*. "We don't earn enough to take care of our families. We get paid \$55 for each load and generally do two trips a day. It's not enough."

"Without the union sometimes they say they'll pay \$50 for a trip, but when you present the bill of lading they pay maybe \$20 or \$30," added Travieso. "With the union they have to sign what they'll pay and not change it."

"The carriers have to work with open

books," Sandro Lerro, a truck driver and Teamsters organizer, said in an interview at the union hall. "The lease agreement says we get 70 percent of the gross on a load. But if you ask how much the gross is they just fire you. Federal law says you get a copy of the contract you sign, but most times you don't. Without the union you have no protection. Plus, costs are high. A long haul to Tampa, for example, takes 13 hours or so roundtrip and they pay \$500. But gas is \$350, plus taxes and maintenance. Maybe the driver ends up with \$50."

While talking with the drivers, a number of workers came into the union hall to sign up.

"Several companies have offered drivers who had signed with the Teamsters \$600 for a trip to Tampa if they would come back without the union," Lerro pointed out. "We urged them not to take

the bait. Also we have a lot of calls today at the union hall from truckers who don't work at the port, but want to know about the union."

Lerro and other drivers said the degree of success in organizing here will have implications for truckers across the country. A week earlier, the union had told the press it plans to open a similar hiring hall in Charleston, South Carolina, within three weeks.

"The whole coast's eyes are on us," Lerro said. "What happens here is an inspiration for Charleston and all the way up."

As we shook hands on the way out of the union hall, he added, "All the truck drivers in the nation want this to win, because we have plans to organize from here to New Jersey."

The Teamsters hiring hall in Miami can be reached at (305) 836-5995.

Solidarity with striking mechanics

Continued from front page

Julie Hagen Showers, Northwest vice president for labor relations, warned that the International Association of Machinists "must cut a deal fast," the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported, or the company will ask the bankruptcy court

to tear up their contracts and impose the bosses' terms. Northwest is now demanding \$83 million more in concessions from the Machinists, including a possible layoff of 6,500.

On September 30 the company called for more concessions from the pilots, including a 28 percent salary cut on top of an earlier 15 percent, and plans to lay off 1,290 pilots. The flight attendants face some 2,640 layoffs, in addition to last month's announcement of 1,400 jobs eliminated, and a 20 percent pay reduction.

"In the months leading up to the strike, you could feel the tension, nobody wanted to talk, people had their heads down, unhappy at having to work for a tyrant," said Ted Ludwig, president of AMFA Local 33, at the solidarity rally. "But when we went on strike you could see the joy and sense of relief as the membership finally felt that we were standing up for what was right and against the abuse. The other workers on the property are staring at the same type of abuse and the right thing to do is to stand up to it now."

Another speaker at the rally, John Killeen, a member of the Ford local 897 United Auto Workers bargaining committee, stated, "We need to stick together and be there for one another. Just keep fighting, and we'll do our part."

French commandos attack seamen

Continued from previous page

made to kneel while other officers handcuffed their leaders."

The French gendarmes then forced the crew to take the ship back to the city of Toulon. Four of the union leaders on board were arrested on hijacking charges there. They were released from jail 48 hours later. Cheering crowds gave them a heroes' welcome upon their arrival in Corsica. If convicted, the unionists could face up to 20 years in prison.

Among those condemning the commando assault is Jean-Guy Talamoni, a leader of the Corsican independence movement. "This is a disproportionate operation by the colonial French police and army against unarmed workers," he told the media.

In an October 3 telephone interview with the *Militant*, SNCM worker Marc Kinzel in Marseille reported that Confederation of Labor (CGT) members there began occupying about 10

SNCM ships September 21. They did so in response to a government ultimatum that the workers either accept complete privatization or the company would be liquidated. Kinzel, who has worked at SNCM for six years, is a member of the CGT and has been part of the walkout. The STC joined the strike five days after it began in Marseille, he said. "The strike intertwines a labor dispute and the national question," Kinzel said. "The Corsican sailors have their own trade union federation, the STC, which calls for national independence for Corsica."

Corsica was first taken over by France in 1768. The fight for national self-determination has been an important political factor there for more than two centuries. In 2003, the island's 260,000 residents voted against an autonomy plan Paris promoted to gain acceptance for the nation's colonial status.

Moncada attack was opening of Cuban Revolution

Below are excerpts from "History Will Absolve Me," Fidel Castro's reconstruction of his October 1953 courtroom speech. This piece is included in From Moncada to Victory: Fidel Castro's Political Strategy by Marta Harnecker, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. Castro and dozens of fighters were imprisoned, and many others killed, after they stormed the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953. Their goal was to mobilize working people in revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship. The speech, later to become the programmatic statement of the July 26 movement, was smuggled out of prison, and printed and distributed to tens of thousands across the country.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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BY FIDEL CASTRO

The regime has stated over and over that our movement did not have popular support. I have never heard an assertion so naive and at the same time so full of bad faith. The regime seeks to show submission and cowardice on the part of the people. They all but claim that the people support the dictatorship;



AIN
Moncada prisoners after being released from Isle of Pines jail in May 1955. In front (from left to right) are Raúl Castro, Juan Almeida, and Fidel Castro.

they do not know how offensive this is to the brave *Orientales*. Santiago thought our attack was only a local disturbance between two factions of soldiers; not until many hours later did they realize what had really happened. If Moncada had fallen into our hands, even the women of Santiago de Cuba would have risen in arms. Many were the rifles loaded for our fighters by the nurses at the Civilian Hospital. They fought alongside us. That is something we will never forget.

Why were we sure of the people's support? When we speak of the people we are not talking about those who live in comfort, the conservative elements of the nation, who welcome any oppressive regime, any dictatorship, any despotism. When we speak of struggle and we mention the people, we mean the vast unredeemed masses, those to whom everyone makes promises and who are deceived by all; we mean the people who yearn for a better, more dignified, and more just nation.

In terms of struggle, when we talk about people we're talking about the *six hundred thousand* Cubans without work...; the *five hundred thousand* farm laborers who live in miserable shacks, who work four months of the year and starve the rest; the *four hundred thousand* industrial workers and laborers...; the *one hundred thousand* small farmers who live and die working land that is not theirs; the *thirty thousand* teachers and professors...*twenty thousand* small businessmen weighed down by debts, ruined by the crisis, and harangued by a plague of grafting and venal officials.

The five revolutionary laws that would have been proclaimed immediately after the capture of the Moncada garrison and would have been broadcast to the nation by radio must be included in the indictment.

The first revolutionary law would have returned the power to the people and proclaimed the 1940 constitution the supreme law of the state until such

time as the people should decide to modify or change it.

The second revolutionary law would give nonmortgageable and nontransferable ownership of the land to all tenant and subtenant farmers, lessees, sharecroppers, and squatters who hold parcels of five *caballerias* of land or less.

The third revolutionary law would have granted workers and employees the right to share 30 percent of the profits of all large industrial, mercantile, and mining enterprises, including the sugar mills.

The fourth revolutionary law would have granted all sugar planters the right to share 55 percent of the sugar production and a minimum quota of forty thousand *arrobas* for all small tenant farmers who have been established for three years or more.

The fifth revolutionary law would have ordered the confiscation of all holdings and ill-gotten gains of those who had committed fraud during previous regimes, as well as the holdings and ill-gotten gains of all their legates and heirs.

Furthermore, it was to be declared that the Cuban policy in the Americas would be one of close solidarity with the democratic peoples of this continent, and that all those politically persecuted by bloody tyrannies oppressing our sister nations would find generous asylum, brotherhood, and bread in the land of Martí.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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October

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL OCTOBER 31

Abortion: a woman's right to choose!

We use our editorial space this week to print the statement below, which was released October 5 by Diana Newberry, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 14.

The Socialist Workers Party campaign is urging working people to vote “no” on Proposition 73. Mandating parental notification and a 48-hour waiting period before women under 18 may get an abortion, this measure is an attack on a woman's right to choose abortion and the right to privacy. It is directed at the right of all women to control their own bodies.

The freedom to decide whether and when to bear children is a fundamental precondition to women winning full equality—from the ability to make decisions on education and employment, to being active in unions and in social and political life.

Defending this right is vital to the interests of the entire working class. Bosses profit and workers are weakened by keeping women in second-sex status. Using such discrimination and prejudices, employers pay women less, which drags down wages for all workers.

Since abortion was decriminalized in 1973, Democrats and Republicans have led an unrelenting offensive to chip away at access—including through eliminating Medicaid and other public funding for abortion, imposing waiting periods, parental notification or consent laws for minors, and the demagogically misnamed “partial-birth abortion” ban. Only 13 percent of counties in the United States have an abortion provider today.

These attacks come down disproportionately hard on working-class women. They are accompanied by lies such as “abortion is murder,” which Proposition 73 feeds into by defining abortion as causing “the death of an unborn child.” Many “pro-choice” Democrats

reinforce such arguments when they proclaim abortion should be “safe, legal, and rare.” Or when they stop from even using the word abortion, referring only to “choice” in the abstract.

The U.S. rulers' aim in targeting women's rights is to roll back social gains working people made through the civil rights movement and related struggles of the 1960s and '70s. They seek to reinforce women's second-class status as part of pushing more of the burden of caring for the young, ill, and elderly onto individuals and their families. When the Clinton administration took the lead in eliminating “welfare as we know it” in 1996—the first major inroad against the Social Security Act of the 1930s—it dealt a major blow to women's rights.

Working people and our allies need to mobilize independently of the twin parties of capitalism to defend the right to choose abortion, not subordinate this fight to electing Democrats or other capitalist politicians. The massive April 2004 march on Washington to keep abortion safe and legal, as well as the mobilizations that put a stop to clinic blockades by rightists in the 1990s, show the extent of popular support for a woman's right to choose. This has been the decisive factor in defending *Roe v. Wade*, the ruling that decriminalized abortion—not a predominance of sympathetic judges on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The SWP opposes all restrictions on access to abortion. We also reject any population control schemes like forced sterilization or other tools of racism and class prejudice, and oppose using abortion for birth control, as the Stalinist regimes did for decades in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Teenagers and all other women should have free and accessible contraception of choice.

Join us in campaigning to defeat Proposition 73!

California: campaign launched to defeat Proposition 73 restricting access to abortion

BY DIANA NEWBERRY
AND NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES—Over 100 people gathered here October 1 to kick off a campaign against Proposition 73. The measure, an attack on a woman's right to choose abortion, will be on the California state ballot in the November 8 special election. It would amend the state constitution to require that parents or guardians of teenagers under the age of 18 be notified 48 hours before an abortion. The only way a young woman could avoid this kind of notification—other than in the case of a life-threatening emergency—would be through a complicated court procedure.

The initiative gained ballot status through a campaign spearheaded by James Holman, a millionaire who is the publisher of *Los Angeles Mission*, *San Francisco Faith*, and *San Diego News Notes*, and has been part of abortion clinic blockades.

In 1997 the California Supreme Court struck down a similar law, on the grounds that it violated the state constitution's guarantee of the right to privacy. Proposition 73 seeks to get around this ruling by amending the state constitution. Similar laws are in force in 34 of the 50 U.S. states.

In addition to its restrictions on access to abortion, the proposed law would define abortion as causing “the death of the unborn child, a child conceived but not yet born.” This is designed to set the tone for further attacks on women's right to choose abortion.

“This proposition is aimed at chipping away at a woman's right to choose abortion,” said Diana Newberry, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council District 14, talking with participants at the October 1 event. “Women should have the right to control our own bodies” (see also statement above).

The “No on 73: Campaign for Teen Safety” is organized by a coalition of dozens of organizations. They include the California Medical Association, California Nurses Association, Planned Parenthood, American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, Feminist Majority, and California NOW.

At the Campaign for Teen Safety kickoff event held at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, speakers included



Militant/Frank Forrestal
Diana Newberry (right), Socialist Workers candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 14, campaigns at October 1 anti-Proposition 73 event in the city.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, State Senator Gloria Romero, and State Assembly member Judy Chu. Many pointed out that the proposition is aimed at rolling back a woman's right to choose and will push some teenagers into unsafe, illegal abortions. One of the examples used was the case of Becky Bell, a teenager from Indiana who died in 1988 from a back-alley abortion after a parental notification law went into effect. The coalition puts forward that “you can't legislate good family communication” and “prevention and strong families are the real solutions.” A number of speakers railed against Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Upcoming activities against Proposition 73 include an educational forum in Los Angeles October 19 and one in San Diego the next day. In weekly phone-banking nights at Planned Parenthood offices throughout Los Angeles proponents of a woman's right to choose abortion will urge people to vote “no.” The Feminist Majority is organizing on campuses in the region to get out information on this attack on access to abortion, and to build a regional conference in November.

Newberry and SWP campaign supporters have been speaking out on this question on the job, at plant gates, candidates' forums, and media interviews, including in a statement that will be broadcast on the city access television channel prior to the November 8 election.

UK airline caterers

Continued from front page

workforce and break the union.

The locked-out workers stood up to intimidation, beating back a court injunction against their daily protest pickets, at times 300 strong, on a small hill overlooking a major airport road.

Gate Gourmet and BA bosses were surprised when BA baggage handlers struck for two days in solidarity, bringing flights to a standstill and costing the airline an estimated \$72 million. British Airways flights were never fully catered during the dispute.

Defiant groups of workers took their protest to the TUC and Labour Party conferences, collected fighting fund donations, and gathered solidarity at union meetings and at the September 24 antiwar demonstration. Solidarity rallies for the Heathrow workers also took place in the United States, where Gate Gourmet employs 6,000 people. While many of the locked-out workers had experience in previous union battles, for many this was their first taste of mobilising union power. They were keen to tell the *Militant* how they had learned from this solidarity and unity.

Under the agreement, 187 of the 713 sacked workers will get their jobs back. Another 210 were offered the choice of re-employment or voluntary redundancy. A further 172 workers who previously signed up will get redundancy (severance) pay in addition to 144 compulsory redundancies. Workers are being informed individually and have the right to appeal with the help of union lawyers. Gate Gourmet insists that the deal will not be finalized until those forced to resign sign “compromise agreements” waiving their right to appeal to employment tribunals.

In a joint statement issued September 27, Gate Gourmet and the TGWU said, “Both the company and the union are pleased that a way forward has been found and if the agreement is ratified both sides are committed to work together to rebuild trust and confidence after all the difficulties.” Union officials estimate that a return to work will begin October 10.

Despite the settlement vote, Gate Gourmet workers are maintaining the daily picket with two 60-strong shifts. “We are staying on the hill until everything is clear and sorted out,” Jagjeet Bhamra told the *Militant*. “We can't trust the bosses until we can see our job or our money. The company says that compulsory redundancy will be for things like time off sick, but it does not want the union. By staying on the hill we want to show the public what has happened.”

While the agreement specifies re-engagement on the same pay, benefits, and conditions, workers on the hill told the *Militant* that Gate Gourmet has already started to change work practices. New hires are not covered by the deal. Shop steward Jim Vicars said that new hires will face lower pay rates and different conditions.

Meanwhile, British Airways has started disciplinary proceedings against three TGWU shop stewards following August's unofficial solidarity strike at Heathrow. Two have been suspended from work.

—LETTERS—

‘Militant’ by first-class mail

Many thanks for sending my *Militant* sub first-class mail. I receive it at least seven days sooner. A real pleasure to get it into my hands four days after the mailing. I must add that the new format makes reading the paper so much easier. Thanks for the larger print and more spacing. I'm enclosing a check for the added cost, 60 cents per issue, for the rest of the year. Hope it covers the extra cost. Living here in Southern California the high point of my week is the *Militant* in my mail box on Tuesday.

Mary Lipman
Santa Cruz, California

Thanks for the feedback. All readers, especially those on the West Coast and smaller towns in the United States, who would like to receive the Militant faster can have delivery by first-class mail for an additional cost of \$10 per six months. —Editor

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.